

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00644 01 OF 02 161104Z

15

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 L-02 MC-01 ACDA-05 EB-07 PRS-01 OMB-01

TRSE-00 SAJ-01 EUR-12 H-01 /074 W

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R 161010Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2350

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

DA WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 644

SECDEF FOR ISA/NESA

CINCEUR FOR ECJBA

DA FOR DALO-ILS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MARS MCAP LE IS US

SUBJECT: LEBANESE ARMY REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 6621

SUMMARY: EMBASSY APRECIATIVE OF DEPARTMENT'S PROMPT INTERIM
RESPONSE TO LEBANESE ARMY'S REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE AND PARTICULARLY
SO IN LIGHT SUPPLY SITUATION AND COMPETING DEMANDS. HOWEVER,
WE BELIEVE THIS RESPONSE--LIMITED AS IT IS TO ANOTHER PARTIAL
SHIPMENT OF TOW AND LAW-- WILL FALL FAR SHORT OF LEBANESE HOPES
AND EXPECTATIONS. GIVEN DIFFICULT SITUATION IN WHICH GOL NOW
FINDS ITSELF, CAUGHT BETWEEN FEDAYEEN, ISRAEL AND VARIOUS ARAB
GOVTS, IN DEPARTMENT'S CONTINUING STUDY OF LEBANESE REQUEST,
WE STRONGLY URGE SPECIAL EFFORT BE MADE TO COME CLOSER TO GOL'S
DESIRE EVEN IF IT INVOLVES REALIGNMENT OF EXISTING DELIVERY

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 00644 01 OF 02 161104Z

PRIORITIES. END SUMMARY.

1. AS INDICATED IN OUR EARLIER REPORTING, FOLLOWING 12 DEC ISRAELI AIR RAID ON BEIRUT, GOL DIRECTED MINDEF TO SOLICIT CAPABILITY/WILLINGNESS OF OTHER MEMBERS OF ARAB DEFENSE COUNCIL TO SUPPLY LEBANESE ARMY'S URGENT DEFENSE NEEDS. SIMULTANEOUSLY, ARMY HIGH COMMAND CAME TO US AND SAID, IN EFFECT: HE IS WHAT WE ARE ASKING FOR, BUT WE DO NOT WANT TO ACCEPT LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES OF RECEIVING SUCH ASSISTANCE FROM ARAB NATIONS OR USSR. LEBANESE ARMY AND GOL AWARE US SUPPLY PROBLEMS, BUT CONSIDERS THEIR REQUEST SMALL COMPARED TO LARGE INFUSION USG ARMS JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA WHO AT THE MOMENT MUCH LESS IN AREA OF CONFLICT THAN LEBANON. ISRAELI ATTACK ON BEIRUT AND ALMOST CONTINUOUS OVER-FLIGHTS LEBANESE TERRITORY INCLUDING FREQUENT OVERFLIGHTS OVER BEIRUT HAS CREATED GREAT PRESSURE ON GOL TO "DO SOMETHING" TO BOLSTER ARMY DEFENSE. AS A MINIMUM, WE HOPE USG WILL BE ABLE TO GIVE US NOW THE REMAINDER OF TOWS CONTRACTED FOR UNDER FMS CASE UJU (I.E., 16 LAUNCHERS AND 624 MISSILES) AND 10 VULCAN RADAR CONTROLLED ANTI-AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS."

2. WE HAVE ALREADY NOTED THE DELIVERY OF AT LEAST TWO ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS AND AMMO BY KUWAIT. WE HAVE ALSO NOTED PRESS REPORTS THAT LIBYA IS PREPARED TO SUPPLY LEBANON WITH AN INTEGRATED GUN AND MISSILE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. HOWEVER, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, GOL HAS NOT YET EXECUTED ANY SUPPLY AGREEMENT WITH LIBYA OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY. WE BELIEVE ARMY LEADERSHIP IS WAITING FOR THE USG'S RESPONSE BEFORE TAKING FURTHER ACTION. THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE SPECIAL EFFORT, INCLUDING, IF NECESSARY REALIGNMENT OF EXISTING DELIVERY PRIORITIES, NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO SATISFY GOL'S MINIMUM DESIRES.

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00644 02 OF 02 161236Z

12

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

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TRSE-00 SAJ-01 EUR-12 H-01 /074 W

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SECDEF WASHDC
INFO DIA WASHDC
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DA WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 644

SECDEF FOR ISA/NESA

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3. RE DEPT'S CONCER EXPRESSED PARA 5 REFTTEL, SHOULD BE NOTED THAT LEBANESE ARMY'S POLICY VIS-A-VIS FEDAYEEN IS NOT RPT NOT ONE OF TOTAL INACTION OR PERMISSIVENESS. AS NOTED OUR 7698 (JULY 4), ARMY STILL TRIES TO KEEP TABS ON FEDAYEEN MOVEMENTS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY AND TO PREVENT CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS WHEN DETECTED. ITS EFFECTIVENESS, HOWEVER, IS INHIBITED BY GOL'S POLICY OF NON-CONFRONTATION WITH FEDAYEEN (POLICY WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED LEBANESE-FEDAYEEN RELATIONS EVER SINCE TRAUMATIC EVENTS OF MAY 1973), BY FACT THAT ARMY'S RELATIVE STRENGTH VIS-A-VIS FEDAYEEN "ON THE GROUND" IN SOUTH LEBANON HAS DECLINED APPRECIABLY IN RECENT MONTHS, AND BY FAILURE OF GOL POLITICAL LEADERSHIP TO ISSUE PRECISE, UNEQUIVOCAL INSTRUCTIONS TO ARMY COMMANDERS REGARDING LIMITS TO BE SET ON FEDAYEEN ACTIVITY AND WHAT ACTION TO TAKE IF THOSE LIMITS ARE VIOLATED. WHILE THERE MIGHT BE MORE THAT COULD BE DONE BY LEBANESE ARMY IN WAY OF PASSIVE MEASURES TO ASSERT ITS PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON (E.G., BY
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 00644 02 OF 02 161236Z

INCREASED PATROLLING, SETTING UP MORE OBSERVATION POSTS AND CHECK POINTS, ETC.), THESE STEPS ARE NOT RPT NOT LIKELY TO HAVE MUCH ADDITIONAL EFFECT-- GIVEN INHIBITING FACTORS CITED ABOVE-- ON CIRCUMSCRIBING FEDAYEEN ACTIVITY AGAINST ISRAEL. IN OUR VIEW, EFFECTIVE CURTAILMENT OF FEDAYEEN ACTIVITY WOULD ONLY BE POSSIBLE IF GOL WERE TO JETTISON ITS NON-CONFRONTATION POLICY AND BEGIN TO TAKE MORE ACTIVE, AGGRESSIVE MEASURES TO CONTAIN AND/OR INTERDICT FEDAYEEN GROUPS NOW OPERATING FROM SOUTH LEBANON. WHAT KANAAN HAS BEEN SAYING, IN EFFECT, IS THAT GOL IS NOT RPT NOT WILLING TO TAKE POLITICAL DECISION WHICH WOULD RISK CONFRONTATION WITH FEDAYEEN AND THAT ARMY AGREES THAT WITH ARMY'S PRESENT MANPOWER RELATIVE TO FEDAYEEN STRENGTH AND ITS CURRENT MATERIEL DEFICIENCIES, IT DOES NOT HAVE CAPABILITY OF SUCCESSFULLY PROSECUTING SUCH A CONFRONTATION. ALTHOUGH WE FAR FROM CERTAIN THAT POLITICAL DECISION WOULD BE DIFFERENT IF ARMY WERE SIGNIFICANTLY STRONGER, GOL'S ABILITY TO BE MORE THE MASTER OF ITS OWN HOUSE WOULD CERTAINLY BE INCREASED AND POSSIBILITY IT MIGHT ACT MORE BOLDLY IN TRYING CONTROL FEDAYEEN WOULD BE ENHANCED.

4. WE WILL MAKE POINTS RAISED IN PARA 5 REFTEL WHICH WE HAVE BEEN DOING FOR SOME TIME. IN MAKING THESE POINTS IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF WE HAD BETTER APPRECIATION OF TYPE OF COUNSEL WE HAVE BEEN GIVING THE ISRAELIS. ALTHOUGH WE AGREE LEBANESE FAILURE TO DO MORE TO CONTROL FEDAYEEN HAS OBVIOUSLY CONTRIBUTED TO PRESENT SITUATION, WE ALSO FEEL ISRAELIY ARE NOT WITHOUT SIN RE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXISTING PGOBLEM. ISRAELI DEC 12 ATTACK ON BEIRUT WAS TO US TACTICAL ERROR. GOL CAN GENERALLY HANDLE POLITICALLY THE AFTERMATH OF ISRAELI RETALIATION RAIDS IN THE SOUTH BUT ATTACKS ON BEIRUT ARE ANOTHER MATTER. IT WAS THIS ATTACK WHICH IN LARGE MEASURE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT FLURRY TO OBTAIN ARMS AND ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER ARAB STATES AND WHICH UNFORTUNATELY TENDS IMPROVE FEDAYEEN IMAGE IN EYES LOCAL PUBLIC OPINION. CONSEQUENTLY IN APPROACHING KANAAN WE FEEL OUR DEMARCHE WOULD HAVE MORE FORCE IF WE COULD INDICATE WE WERE TRYING TO MODERATE ISRAELI RESPONSE AT THE SAME TIME AS WER WERE ENCOURAGINGH THE LEBANESE TO TAKE MORE ENERGETIC MEASURES TO LIMIT THE PROVOCATION.

5. NEW BUT RELATED SUBJECT: PRESS THIS MORNING HEADLINES THAT CABINET MEETING YESTERDAY APPROVED ADDRESSING A REQUEST TO ARAB LEAGUE DEFENSE COUNCIL WITHIN NEXT FORTH HOURS FOR A MEETING OF THAT COUNCIL. RELIABLE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICER INDICATED FOREIGN
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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 00644 02 OF 02 161236Z

MINISTRY HAS NOT REPEAT NOT YET BEEN SEIZED OF MATTER AND ALL IT KNOWS IS WHAT HAS APPEARED IN THE PRESS. WE WILL OF COURSE FOLLOW UP.
GODLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MILITARY EQUIPMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: WorrelSW
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT00644
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750017-0103
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750148/aaaabpsb.tel
Line Count: 201
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 6621
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: WorrelSW
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 AUG 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <02 DEC 2003 by WorrelSW>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE ARMY REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, MCAP, LE, IS, US
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006